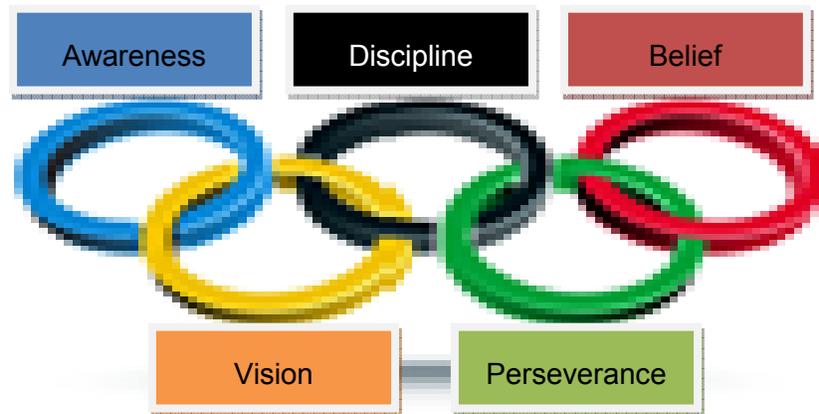


Becoming Mentally Tough!!

The five rings of mental toughness are **awareness**, **vision**, discipline, **perseverance** and **belief**. Using these five rings together will help you to build yourself into an athlete that is eager, disciplined and committed to be the best you can possibly be.



Awareness

So that you can train your mind, you must be aware of what you are thinking at all times. If you are not aware of your mind, it is very easy to lose your focus. Symptoms of a loose mind are any thoughts that are negative, fear-based or doubtful. Over-thinking, complaining and procrastination are also symptoms of a loose mind. You cannot go through your training sessions, or indeed your life, without a plan, just reacting to what happens to you. Set yourself clear and simple goals, both short term and long term. Look at your goals regularly and constantly review them. Make them the focus of what you are about all the time!



Vision



If you can imagine it, then you can become it! You must create a vision of who you want to be. Work out your goals and ensure that you actually believe them. Define how you are going to act at training. Use positive words like: motivated, confident, focused, happy, proud, aggressive and persistent, to define the vision of yourself every time you train. Write these words on sheets and put them up in your bedroom and in the gym.

Use these words to strengthen your resolve to achieve your vision.

Discipline

A still mind has unlimited potential. There is a considerable amount of time between 'goes' both at training and in competition and the mind can be distracted by unnecessary talking or worry about what you are doing. The key is being able to lock your mind so that it is focused on positive, helpful thoughts. Positive self-talk and focus on skills are strong anchors to help you be absolutely clear on what you are trying to achieve. Be prepared to talk to yourself about skills that you are performing at training or are doing in routines at competition. Use short, sharp, strong cue words to anchor the mind and keep out fear and self-doubt. **Do not over think.**



Tie your cue words with visual 'walk-throughs' or physical 'arm sets'.

Perseverance



True champions see every obstacle as an opportunity. Gymnastics is a sport built upon having to try and try again. How many times do you have to attempt a skill before it is achieved? Your mind immediately goes loose and negative when you give up and defeatism takes over. Perseverance is essential! Loose mind behaviour includes stalling, balking, negative body language and negative talk. Use anchor phrases like 'I can do this', 'don't let this get in my way', 'don't let this get to me', 'do what my coach told me' or simple words like 'breathe', 'focus', 'arms', 'head', etc. Breaking the loose mind cycle will help you build your mental strength.

Belief

There is nothing greater than the power of belief. Whether you believe you can, or believe you can't, you are right! You must believe that you can do it. You must believe that you are a good gymnast, that you can achieve, that you are strong, that you are a great competitor and so on, if it is to be true. If you do not believe that you can get to where you want to be then all the training that you are doing is wasted. You need to act out your beliefs all the time - how you stand, walk, train and perform shows others how much that you believe in yourself.



**Being mentally tough is a reflection
of who you are and what you want to achieve!**